OUR Saviours Passion:

Delivered in a

SERMON,

Preach'd in the Cathedral Church of Saint PETER in

EXON.

On Good Friday, the First of *April*, 1670.

BY

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LONDON,

Printed for *Richard Royston*, and are to be sold by *Abishai Brocas* Bookseller in *Exon.* 1670.

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To the Right Worſhipful *William Morton* Knight, one of the Honourable Juſtices of the Kings Bench.

Honoured Sir,

THE *ſatisfaction that was expreſt at the hearing of this Sermon, and the Candid entertainment it hath found ſince, have induc'd me to gratifie the requeſts of ſome, in making it more publick; which I the rather comply'd with, becauſe it gave me an opportunity to publiſh to your Honour, and the World, my grateful reſentment of your great and unmerited favours. I am not ſo vain as to imagine that any thing therein deliver'd ſhould be thought able to preſent your Honour with any inſtruction, or make the leaſt addition to the ample ſtock of your preſent knowledge; if it may prove only a remembrancer, or upon any other account may be eſteem'd worthy your Honours peruſal or acceptance, the Author hath attain'd his end, and will reſt ſatisfied in the ſuc-*

dæa, *and all ye that dwell at* Jeruſalem, *be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words, for theſe men (whom you thus wickedly traduce) are not drunk with Wine, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the Day*; and thoſe ſudden inſpirations which you have heard and ſeen, are not, as you prophanely imagine, the effects of *Enthuſiaſm* or intemperance, but the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and in them is accompliſh'd that gracious promiſe of the plentiful effuſion of knowledge that ſhould come to paſs in the laſt days; but we need not wonder (as he goes on) at this your carriage towards them, (v. 22.) ſince Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, who was a man approved of God among you by miracles, ſignes and wonders, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye your ſelves alſo know, yet even him, not without the determinate counſell and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.

So that the words are part of that excellent and ſucceſsful Sermon of St. *Peter* preached unto the Jews, wherein he ſharply rebuked them for their barbarous and inhumane carriage towards him who abundantly prov'd himſelf to be the true Meſſias; and from them I ſhall treat,

1. Firſt of all, concerning our Saviours Paſſion, in the three ſteps or degrees of it, mentioned here in the Text, viz. *That he was taken, and by wicked hands crucified, and ſlain*; to which I ſhall add a word or two touching the cauſe and the deſign of his undergoing all this.

2. Secondly, I ſhall ſhew, that this his Paſſion was not without the determinate counſell and fore-knowledge of God.

3. And, laſtly, conclude with ſome practical inferences from the whole.

I begin with the Hiſtory of our Saviours Paſſion, and there with the firſt ſtep of it, which is his apprehenſion or being taken, *him ye have taken*; this we know is the firſt degree of puniſhment that is wont to be exercis'd towards Malefactors, who are firſt apprehended & arraign'd, before they are condemn'd or executed: Suitable hereunto, the Sons of violence laid hands on

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our Saviour to take him; which act of pretended juſtice was not done by any private or ſingle perſon, but by the counſell, or rather the conſpiracy of the chief Prieſts and Elders; for we read, in *Mat.* 26. *v.* 4. *That they held a conſultation, how they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and carry him away*; though his daily preſence at *Jeruſalem* ſeem'd to give them fair opportunities of effecting their deſign, yet the reputation he had with the people made them not ſo forward to embrace them, and therefore they dealt underhand with one of his own Diſciples, corrupting him with the promiſe of a reward, to betray him with the greater ſecrecy into their hands. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, *Herod* and *Pilate*, though bitter enemies to each other, and ſcarce agreeing in any thing elſe, yet did conſpire together in the apprehending and taking our Saviour; ſo true was that prediction of the *Pſalmiſt*, in the ſecond *Pſalm*, *v.* 2, *The Kings of the Earth ſet themſelves, and the rulers take counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed.* The place where they apprehended him was in the Garden, where, after the treachery of *Judas* in betraying him, a band of Souldiers ſeiz'd on his Perſon, hall'd him away before *Pilate*, and from thence into priſon, where he met with no better company then an infamous Robber nam'd *Barrabbas*, who yet, by a cuſtom of releaſing one at the Feaſt, was diſmiſt at the requeſt of the people, whilſt our Saviour was ſacrificed to the clamors and crucifige's of the multitude. The manner of his apprehenſion *St. Luke* informs, in the 22. Chap. *v.* 52. *They came out againſt him, as againſt a thief, with Swords and Staves.* He who was the very pattern, and great exemplar, of lowlineſs, of meekneſs, was yet thus roughly handled by the mercileſs Souldiers; and though *Peter*, out of a high reſentment hereof, offered to make reſiſtance by drawing his ſword, and cutting off the ear of one of the High Prieſt's ſervants, yet our Saviour ſharply check't his inconſiderate zeal and raſhneſs; partly, becauſe they did all by the authority and command of the Magiſtrate, againſt whom he would by no means ſuffer or encourage the leaſt reſiſtance; & partly becauſe it behov'd him to ſuffer, and to be thus handled, for the compleating the work of our redemption.

But the jealous malice and violence of the Souldiers thought him not yet sufficiently secur'd before they had cast their cords on him, and carried him away bound unto *Pilate*, as we read, *Mat.* 27. 2 Having seiz'd on his Person, they secure him in Bonds, and make all haste to dispatch him away, to prevent his escape, or rescue; which circumstance of their malice was prefigur'd in the Old Testament, by tying the Sacrifices with Cords, and dragging them bound to the Altar, as also his being apprehended and taken was not obscurely presignified in *Joseph*'s being taken and carried prisoner into *Egypt*, of which we read in *Gen.* 39. And so much, briefly, for the first step or degree of our Saviours Passion, namely his being taken.

2. The second degree of it mention'd here in the Text, is his being crucified; we know a man may be apprehended, and yet afterward dismist without any farther censure or infliction; but the malice of the Jews towards our Saviour rested not so, but proceeded further, to his crucifixion. *Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands crucified.* This affixing of Criminals unto a Cross was a Romane punishment, inflicted only on thieves and robbers, or other very notorious offenders; till *Constantine* the first Christian Emperour, out of a Pious honour and respect to Christ's death, forbade any farther use of it; but for the better understanding hereof, we must know that the Romans, to encrease the shame and sting of this punishment, made use of these four circumstances toward those on whom it was inflicted; all which were improv'd to the very highest degree of cruelty in our Saviour's Crucifixion.

First, those that were condemn'd to this punishment were made to bear their Cross upon their shoulders to the place of execution, which was ever without the City. So *Plutarch* tells us expresly, [*Plutar. de his qui sero puniuntur.*] Τῷ μὲν σωματι τῶν κολαζομένων ἕκαστος τῶν κακουργων ἐκφέρει τὸν αὐτοῦ σταυρόν, i. e. malefactors when they are led forth to execution, each one bears his own cross: and *Artemidorus* [Artem. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 42.] is as plain, ἔοικε καὶ ὁ σταυρος τῷ θανάτῳ καὶ ὁ μέλλων προσελούσθαι

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πρότερον αὐτὸν βαστάζει, i.e. the Cross resembles death, and he that was to be crucified did first bear it; in complyance with which custom, the barbarous Jews leading forth our Saviour, forc't him to bear his own Cross, as we read, *John* 19. 17. as if it were not enough to be thus shamefully executed, unless he bare the unhappy instrument of his shame; or because the Cross was shortly to bear him, therefore he should be constrain'd to bear it. It is indeed said, that *Simon* the *Cyrenian* was compelled to bear his Cross, *Mat.* 27. 32. but that was onely when our Saviour through weariness had almost fainted under the burden; else, had his strength held out, he had found none to have eas'd him of that reproachful weight. Now this act of bearing his Cross was represented to us in the Old Testament, by *Isaack*'s bearing the wood for Sacrifice, of which we read, *Gen.* 22. in allusion and imitation hereof it was, that our Saviour told his followers, that if they would be his Disciples, they must take up their Cross and follow him, in the patient bearing of distress and infamy.

Secondly, Those who were to undergoe this punishment were commanded to be stript of their clothes and to suffer naked, for so *Artemidorus* assures us, γύμνοι ἐπάσχοντο οἱ μέλλοντες σταυροθῆναι, they that were to be crucified were stript naked. Sutable whereunto we read, concerning our Saviour, *Mat.* 27. 28. that they stript him of his clothes; he who was cloth'd with Light, as with a garment, and invested with the glorious robes of immortality, was pleas'd for a while to lay these aside, and put on the rags of humane flesh, together with those outward coverings that were ordain'd to conceal our shame; but of these too did unthankful mortalls unworthily strip him; and, as if he had aspir'd too high, when he parted with his glory for these inconsiderable ornaments, he was wholly depriv'd of them, and expos'd naked to all their scoffs and revilings; and having thus stript him, *They parted his Garments among them, and upon his Vesture did they cast lots, Mat.* 27. 35.

Thirdly, Those who, among the *Romans*, were condemn'd to

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this punishment were first of all to be whipt and scourged. So St. *Jerome* informs us; *Sciendum est, legibus Romanis sanctum esse, ut qui crucifigitur prius flagellis verberetur*, i. e. It was decreed by the Laws of the *Romans*, that they who were to be crucified should be first scourg'd; accordingly *Valerius* tells us of one, *qui tergum suum verberibus multatum ad supplicium egisset*; and *Artemidorus* of another, ὁ προσδεθεὶς μὲν πολλὰς δὲ πληγὰς, i. e. who being ty'd to a Pillar receiv'd many stripes; this circumstance of Barbarity too was exercised towards our Saviour, *Mat.* 27. 26. *when they had scourged Jesus they delivered him up to be crucified.* Having stript him naked they lash and scourge him on every side, the bitterness whereof was encreas'd by that reproachful taunt us'd at every blow, now prophesy who it is that strikes thee; of this did the Evangelical Prophet *Isaias* plainly foretell, in *Isai.* 53. 5. *The Chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed.*

Fourthly, Those who were wont to be fasten'd to the Cross had the cause of their punishment writen over them in Capital Letters, that so the equity of it might the better appear to the World. Hence *Dio* tells us of a servant hanging on the Cross μετὰ γραμμάτων τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς θανατώσεως δηλούντων, with letters declaring the cause of his death; this piece of pretended justice too was not omitted towards our Saviour; for having nail'd his body to the Cross all besmear'd in blood and gore, which the nails and scourges drew from him, they set over his head this accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS, *Mat.* 27. 37. Which that it might be the more generally known and understood by all, St. *Luke* tells us it was written in three Languages, viz. in *Latine*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew*, *Luke* 23. 38. Thus did the malicious Jews improve this *Roman* punishment to the height of cruelty upon our Saviour, crucifying him between two thieves, as if he had been the Arch-malefactor; where after he had hung on the Cross from the sixth to the ninth hour, upon the tender wounds of his hands and feet, he gave up the Ghost, which was the last act of this dole-

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full Tragedy, and leads us to the third step or degree of his Passion, mention'd in the Text; to wit, his death, or being slain, *Him ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.* As we shewed before, that the taking of any prisoner doth not necessarily suppose any farther censure, much less crucifixion; so neither doth crucifixion necessarily import death; for they on whom it is inflicted, being fasten'd to the Cross not by any vital part, die so leasurely, that being taken from thence, may easily be suppos'd to live: but neither did the malice of the Jews nor our Saviours sufferings end here, but proceeded to the very extremity of this punishment, and fulfill'd the utmost intention of Crucifixion; hence St. *Paul* tells us, *Philip. 2. 3. That he became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross*, which of all the Romane ways of excution was the most painful, and the most ignominious.

First of all, I say, his death was exceeding painful and dolorous; for he was nail'd to the Cross, not by those parts that might have inferr'd sudden death, and so quickly have dispatch't his pain, but by his hands and feet, which are of all other the most nervous, and consequently the most sensible parts; by which means they made him (as *Nero* afterward did the Christians) *sentire se mori*, feel himself dying, and endur'd the racking torments of a lingring death; their cruel scourges in the mean while fetching blood, and making long furrows upon his back; the Souldiers pierc't his side with spears, and his Soul with scoffs and mockings more sharp then they; the multitude came about him hanging on the Cross, not to pity but deride him; and as if he had been the vilest miscreant upon earth, they spit in his face, and in the midst of all his pain and anguish pour'd on him, not tears, but scorn and contempt. In his bitter Agonies they deny'd him a drop of water, a courtesie never denied any but the damned in hell, and instead thereof filled him a spunge of Vinegar and Gall, on purpose to encrease the bitterness of his Passion. In the Garden of *Gethsemane* his Soul felt greater tortures, than his body on the Cross; there it was, that he drunk that bitter

Cup, which set him in an Agony, and caus'd him to sweat great drops of blood, which made him pray three times most earnestly, *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*; then did he appear forsaken of his friends, and in his apprehension deserted of God too; which made him in the anguish of his Soul to cry out, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* and sure, if we consider these things, we must needs say, that there was no death like unto his, nor any sorrow like unto his sorrow. But,

Secondly, as his death was thus painful, so was it no less shameful and ignominious too; Our Saviour having humbled himself to the form of a servant was condemn'd to be crucified, which *Tacitus* calls *Servile supplicium*, a punishment inflicted onely on servants or slaves, never on any freeman or cirizen; but before he underwent this infamous and slavish death, they kept him a while to sport themselves in his misery; to that end they stript him of his clothes; and in derision put on him a scarlet robe, the true emblem of their crimson sins; and having accus'd him as one aspiring to be King of the Jews, they platted for him a Crown of Thorns, setting it on his head; & because he should not want a Scepter, they put a reed into his right hand, after which they in mockery bow their head to him, saying, *Hail King of the Jews*; and when they had sported their fill with him, they carried him away to be crucified; where, as he hung on the Cross, they reproached him with all his former Miracles and Prophesies, saying *he saved others, himself he cannot save; if he be the Son of God let him now come down from the Cross*; and wagging their heads at him, they said, *thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three dayes, save thy self, Mat.* 27. After all which, he laid down his life, and drank up this bitter Cup,, even to the very dregs.

And now, one would think that these bloody instruments of his death should feel within them some sting of Conscience, and conceive some remorse after so black and tragical an enterprize; but these, alas, as if they were (what was said of *Tiberius*, πήλοι αἱματι πεφυραμένοι, &c. but so many clods of earth kneaded and cemented

mented with blood, remain as senceless & unrelenting after all this, as the Tree on which he hung, or the Grave-stone that covered him; they think of nothing but casting him into the earth, and securing his Grave with a Band of Souldiers; however, since these remorsless Jews could conceive neither sorrow, nor repentance, the whole Creation seem'd concern'd to lament the fall of so great a Person; the Sun drew in its Light, as unwilling to behold so sad a spectacle; the earth trembled and quak'd, as impatient of bearing up those persons that occasion'd it; the heavens were all overcast and cloath'd in black, as the chief mourners at his Funeral; the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; the hard Rocks clave; the Graves opened, and all things but these unrelenting Jews were appall'd and confounded at the Passion of our Lord. And thus have we gone through the several acts or scenes of this direful Tragedy; having seen him taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain; which every one that hath heard will be ready to inquire into the cause for which he suffer'd all this.

For answer whereunto, we must know,

First of all, that sin is the sole meritorious cause of all sorrows and sufferings; which appears, not only, because before sin entred into the world, these things were altogether unknown, and strangers to humane Nature; but likewise, because ever since its entrance, they have ever gone hand in hand together; to this purpose is that of St. *Paul, Rom.* 5. 12. *As by one man sin entered into the World, and death by sin; even so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* But

Secondly, to prevent an Objection, (*Heb.* 7. 26.) that may be taken from the High, Holy, and harmless Nature of Christ, separated from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens; who though he assum'd our Nature, *Heb.* 4. 15. Yet was sin and all kind of irregularities excepted; I say, to prevent this, we must know, that though the immaculate Son of God had no sins of his own to be laid to his charge, and consequently was not liable to punishment, or the displeasure of Heaven, upon his own score, yet when

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he graciously undertook to be our surety or Saviour; the whole burden of our sins lay upon his shoulders, and he became answerable to the justice of God for the transgressions of mankind; and hence was that harsh saying of *Luther*, who styl'd our Saviour *peccatorum maximus*, the greatest of sinners; viz. not by any actual guilt of his own, but only by imputation: Now, since *the wages of sin is death*, *Rom.* 6. 23. *And without shedding of blood there is no remission*, *Heb.* 9. 22. Therefore our Saviour must, and accordingly was content to die, that he might become our sufficient ransom and atonement. And if one sin were enough to turn *Adam* out of Paradise, and to set up a flaming sword to prevent his return; if one sin (whatever it were) were sufficient to throw the laps'd Angels out of Heaven, and to reserve them in *Chains* of darkness to the judgement of the great day, as we read in the Epistle of St. *Jude*; what an unsupportable weight (think we) must be the concurrent guilt of all mankind's transgressions; a pressure sure that must sink the stoutest *Atlas*, and disorder the whole frame of Nature: So that we may cease our wonder at the severity of Christ's sufferings, when we reflect on that complicated guilt which was the cause of them. 'Twere our debts for which Jesus Christ was arrested and imprisoned by the Souldiers, and which by his consequent sufferings he paid to the utmost farthing; our sin was the Spear that pierc't his side, and the nails that fasten'd him to the Cross: which leads us to the

Last thing to be spoken to concerning our Saviours Passion; namely, the end or design of his undergoing all this, which was the expiation of sin, and the restoring us again to the lost love and favour of God: he wore a Crown of Thorns, only that we might wear a Crown of Gold; and those drops of blood which his enemies drew from him, are turn'd into so many pearls to bestud and adorn ours; that scarlet Robe which the Jews put on him, dy'd as it were in his own blood, serves to hide our shame, and to cover for us a multitude of sins; that bitter Cup, which he drunk off to the very dregs, is our *Nectar*, and a glorious Potion of immortality; the Vinegar and Gall, which made

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him to faint, is become our most reviving Cordial; his Crosse, the cursed instrument of his death, is to us a Tree of life, which bears no other fruit than that of knowledge and eternal happinesse; his agonies are our triumphs, and his bloody sweat the most Soveraign Balsam to cure our wounds; the Spear that pierc't our Saviours side open'd there a Fountain for sin and for uncleanesse; he liv'd and died with thieves and robbers, and was numbred among transgressors, only that we might live with Saints, and sing forth his praises with Myriads of Angels; thus did every part of this Tragedy relate wholly to our benefit and advancement; and so much may suffice for the first thing propounded to be spoken to; the

Second, is to shew that all this was done by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God: which truth, beside the expresse words of the Text, is as fully set forth, *Acts* 4.27,28. *Of a truth against the Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of* Israel, *were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy Counsel determin'd before to be done*: for the clearing and evincing whereof, we must know,

First, that there was from all eternity a certain covenant and agreement between the Father and the *Son*, concerning what and how he should suffer; for Almighty God foreseeing the Apostacy and fall of mankind, did from eternity, at least for some of them, decree a ransom and redemption; to effect which, because justice demanded satisfaction for the violation of that positive Law that was to be given to them; the Son, as a surety, interpos'd and promis'd satisfaction; whereupon it was determin'd and agreed between them, what should be the manner and measure of his sufferings, in order to the procuring pardon and redemption for them: of this Covenant, on God the Fathers part, we read, *Isai.* 53.10. *If he shall make his soul an Offering for sin he shall see his seed, and prolong his dayes*: Of the Sons acceptation and undertaking hereof we read, *Psal.* 40.7,8. *Then said I, Loe, I come, in the volume of thy Book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God*; and hence is our Saviour said to be the Lamb slain before

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the Foundations of the World, *Revel.* 13. 8. *viz.* in Gods eternal decree and determination, which makes it evident, that every circumstance of Christs Passion was done by the counsel and fore-knowledge of God; which will yet further appear, if we consider,

Secondly, That as these things were from eternity transacted and resolved upon, between the Father and the Son, so likewise were they by the Spirit of God reveal'd unto the Prophets, and by them delivered unto the World, long before the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Hence St. *Paul*, in the defence of this doctrine, told *Agrippa*, that he said none other things *then those which* Moses *and the Prophets did say should come, that Christ should suffer*, *Act.* 26. 22, 23. yea, if we compare the Prophecies of the Old Testament with the History of the New, we shall find that exact correspondence of the event with the predictions, and the punctual accomplishment of every circumstance, even in that way and manner as it was fore-told, will make it clearly to appear, that all this was done by the determinate Counsel and fore-knowledge of God; which will be yet more plain, if we consider,

Thirdly, that these things were not only punctually fore-told by the Prophets, but likewise prefigur'd in Types, and in a previous manner acted over in the sacrifices; long before our Saviours coming in the flesh, the slaying of the Paschal Lamb in the Passeover, clearly represents the slaughter of this Lamb of God; who was to take away the sins of the world: the lifting up of the brazen Serpent in the wilderness betoken'd, and is accordingly by the Apostle apply'd to the lifting up of the Messias upon the Cross: yea all the Sacrifices under the Law, which were offer'd and purg'd with blood, are but so many Types and Representations of the death of the Messias; signifying to us, that only through his blood we must look for the remission of sins, and through the vail of his flesh alone hope for the admission into the Holy of Holies; all which (without having recourse to the infinity of his wisdom & knowledge) make it more par-

particularly and unquestionably certain, that our Saviours Passion, as to all the Modes and Circumstances of it, was done by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God.

The practical inferences, by way of Application, (our last particular) now follow; and

First of all, from the several steps of our Saviours Passion, together with the infamy and severity of them all, we may learn the hainous and pernicious nature of sin, which could be no otherwise expiated, then by the blood of the Son of God; the sins of lost man cry'd so loud in the ears of Heaven, that Jesus Christ must descend thence, er'e he could stop the clamour; and when he came down, nothing could silence it, but the sweeter voice of that blood that speaketh better things than that of *Abel*: If any can be so dangerously mistaken, as to think sin but a slight matter, let him enter into the High Priests Palace, the Judgment Hall, and Mount *Calvary*, and there see what it cost our Saviour to do it away; let him take a walk in the Garden of *Gethsemane*, and then give his sins a prospect, of what they drew upon a bleeding and Crucified Christ; there maist thou see what a dismall night of affliction thou hast made him to suffer by thy luxury and night-revellings; there maist thou behold those sad wounds and bruises which thy sins have made upon his body; and how he groans under that, at which thou dost but sport thy self; call upon thy deep draughts and riotous excess, to see what a cup of wrath and trembling they have made him to drink off for their sake; shew thy drunkenness the Gall and Worm-wood which he was forc't to swallow for its atonement; call hither thy lewd embraces, and sinfull dalliances, shew them a naked Christ, all over bath'd in tears and blood, to wash off their impurities; bid thy oaths and cursing look yonder, and see the blood and wounds which they have so often plaid withal; view those bitter pangs, throws, and Agonies, which sin hath made him to labour under, and then see whether it be so light and inconsiderable a matter, as thou wouldst fain perswade thy self it is: certainly, if there be any pressure in that which crackt

the very heart-strings of Nature, and made the whole Creation groan; if there be any weight in that which sank the Lord of Heaven and Earth into the Grave, then is sin one of the heaviest and most intolerable burdens in the World.

Secondly, this discourse of our Saviours Passion bids us to conform unto his death, by dying unto sin, and crucifying the the flesh with the affections and lusts; this is the use which the Apostle makes of it, *Rom.* 6. 4. that as Christ dyed and rose again, so should we dye unto sin and live unto God; and verse second, *how shall we that are dead in sin live any longer therein?* was Christ bruised and wounded for our iniquities, and shall we act over the same Tragedy upon him again by our repeated transgressions? had he not sorrow and sufferings enough of old, but by renewed offences will we tear open his wounds afresh, and Crucifie him again? shall we think it much to shed a few penitential tears for that which made him sweat great drops of blood? when Satan, or thy own corrupt heart tempt thee to the commission of any sin; imagine thou saweſt thy Crucified Saviour coming towards thee, shewing thee his Cross, and beseeching thee by all his wounds, that thou wouldest not pierce his side again, or drive any more nails into him; yea, fancy all his wounds to be so many mouths, gaping for pity, and begging thee not to renew their smart by any fresh acts of cruelty; would not this dissuade any that had but the bowels of a man from such unreasonable attempts? imagine that he shewed thee his cheeks swoln with buffetings, his face defil'd with spitting on, his head gor'd with Thorns, and his back torn with scourges; and would not this be a spectacle sad enough to move compassion? Sure, unless we are become transform'd into wild Beasts, we can never delight in the blood of our dearest friend; yea, we must be more savage than they, if we prey upon our Keeper, and wound that hand that doth but reach us out its assistance; let us not then any longer hug that Viper in our bosom, which not only stung our Saviour to death, but likewise gnaws upon our own Conscience, and leaves there a Worm to

torture us, that never dies; let us bury our sins in our Saviours grave; or, like the *Egyptians* of old, let them be all drowned in the Red Sea of his blood.

Thirdly, in this story of our Saviours Passion, we may read the transcendent and unexpressible love of Christ unto mankind, in undergoing all this misery and torment for their sakes; the greatest expression of love that ever was, or could be manifested towards the Sons of men, was the sending of a Saviour into the World; for when all mankind lay in a forlorn, undone condition, unable either to bear or remove the great burden of those miseries which sin had brought upon them; then to feel the gentle hand of a Redeemer taking off the weight, and administring to them ease and deliverance, to find their chains exchang'd for a Crown, and their mourning turn'd into Jubilees, and songs of Triumph; this is a mercy to be expresst only with wonder, and eternity it self is too little sufficiently to celebrate and admire it: especially, considering that the lapsed Angels, those nobler and far more glorious Creatures, were totally past by and neglected, whilst the worthless sons of *Adam* became the select objects of divine love and compassion; this is so high and eminent a testimony of Gods love, that Saint *John* is at a loss, how to describe it, Chap. 3. verse 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*, &c. and St. *Paul*, like one astonisht at the consideration of it, cryes out, *O the depth and height, the length and breadth of this love of God, that passeth knowledge! Eph.* 3. 18. Should any generous Monarch take some forlorn wretch from the dunghill, in all his running sores and Ulcers, and not only receive him into his Palace, but adopt him for his son, and pronounce him his heir; this, though it were a kindness truly great and noble, is yet but a faint resemblance of the great love of God towards us. Yea, farther, should any compassionate Prince expose his own Darling Child to the most barbarous and bloody death, only to save the life of a Traytor, who had oftentimes forfeited it by many acts of Treason and Rebellion; this, though it come somewhat nearer, doth

yet come infinitely ſhort of this unimitable inſtance of God's love and goodneſs; if we would work our hearts to ſome ſence of it, let us

Firſt, meditate a while on the ſurpaſſing greatneſs and eminence of the perſon who ſuffer'd all this for us; it being no other than the eternal and only begotten Son of God; yea, one that was God bleſſed for evermore, and might have been for ever glorious, though the whole World ſtill continued miſerable.

Secondly, let us conſider a little, what kind of death it was that he underwent, a death heighten'd with all the ingredients of pain and anguiſh, that the moſt ingenious and inraged malice could invent or execute; a death, wherein the wrath of God and the ſpite of men, and the rage of all the power of darkneſs moſt fatally conſpir'd.

Thirdly, let us conſider likewiſe the great worthleſneſs of the perſons for whom all this was done; perſons that were not only ſtrangers, but the greateſt Enemies and Rebels to him; perſons, that never did any thing, but what did most highly diſoblige and provoke him. The ſerious conſideration of theſe things may help us to ſome ſmall glimpſes of this unparallel'd mercy, though the juſt dimenſions of it can by no means be comprehended, and is therefore left to be the Object of our eternal praiſes and admiration.

Fourthly, from our Saviours Paſſion, we may learn patiently to bear all the afflictions and croſſes that may befall us in this life; we may not expect better uſage in the World than our Maſter met with, the Diſciple is not above his Lord; as he hath gone before us in this hard and rugged way, ſo hath he left us in him a fair copy of humility and patience for us to write after. The worſt that can happen to us of theſe calamities, are nothing if compared with his Agonies, and bitter paſſion; and ſhall we murmur at a few light afflictions, that bear no proportion at all either with the heavy burden of his ſufferings, or that exceeding excellive weight of glory, which he hath purchaſed